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## DESIGN: ITS IMPORTANCE IN LIFE

Design is a subject of vital importance. It is of that I am going to speak—of its place in education and in life, its importance everywhere; of this, however, very briefly. Look at anything that any one has done, any piece of work, no matter what it is; there are two elements in it which should be distinguished and separately considered. There is the motive of it, its intention or purpose, and there is the execution of it, the performance.

It is in the performance we see the design of it, the art of it. We see in the performance what materials have been used, what terms, how the materials or terms have been combined and arranged. We see in the performance the plan or system of the work, the ways, means, and methods which have been followed in bringing it to completion. We see in the performance the correlation of the parts, the fitness of the parts to the whole, the organic and perfect unity of the whole, and lastly, the appropriateness of the whole to its motive or purpose.

Give this motive or purpose to a hundred men. Let them work it out, each one in his own way, and no two of them will achieve the same result. When you consider the results you observe that in some cases the materials are well chosen and properly used, suitably combined, well handled; the work is done in a simple, systematic, orderly, direct way; in other cases not. In some cases the motive is well followed, the purpose well served; in other cases not. The difference is a difference of design, a difference of art. The design of any work, the art of it, is seen, not in its motive or purpose, not in its usefulness, not in its truth, not in its righteousness, but in its execution, in what I have called the performance.

The problem of life seems to resolve itself into two questions: What to do and how to do it. How to do it? That is a question of design. To do what is necessary or useful, to do what is true, beautiful, or what is right. There are no new motives. People have been following them for ages. In the art of the past we see what success they have had. Begin by reproducing the best things that have been done. Then improve upon them if you can. Bring in new elements, make new combinations and arrangements, not for the sake of change or novelty, but for the sake of the motive of the work. The end is your motive. "Art for art's sake." That is nonsense! Do we talk for the sake of talking? No; we talk because we have something to say.

How few people are able to bring this power of design into their work! They think that art is making things pretty. They don't at

all understand how art is possible to all men at all times and everywhere. The habit of finding your life in your work—that is the first requisite for the artist. There is another; that is, a ceaseless and insatiable love of order. Whether it takes the forms of logic and



ESCLAVE DE LA PASSION ET LUMIÈRE DES YEUX  
By Étienne Dinet

reason, which appeal to the mind, or the forms of balance rhythm, and harmony, which appeal to the senses. As an artist, it is your ceaseless endeavor to create harmony where there is discord. What to do? There lies the wisdom of life. How to do it? There lies the power and the joy of life.

Learning how to do it means in all cases technical exercises, technical practice, leading to technical skill and ability. I know that it has been argued that technical exercises have no place in elementary



PORTRAIT  
By William M. Chase



and preparatory schools, nor in the college and the university. But in the last few years we see a change of opinion. The importance of technical exercises and practices not only as a means of attaining skill or ability, but as a means of appreciating work when it is well done by others, is now at last being recognized, so that along with the history of music, of literature, of architecture, sculpture, and painting we are getting courses of technical exercises, and they are already doing great service. That means that we shall be able not merely to talk and write about works of art, but be able to take the point of view of the designer, the artist, which is always a technical point of view.

Technique is only another word for design, and design and art are one and the same thing. The artist says, I will do this or that. Having decided what to do, he no longer thinks in the abstract terms of language. Unless he proposes to speak or to write, he thinks in the materials and terms, in the forms of effort or exertions, belonging to the art in which his work is to be achieved. He thinks what he is going to do, how he is going to do it, and then he does it. He does not talk about it or write about it—he does it, using all the technical skill and ability he has. To appreciate what he has done, what he has achieved, you must also be able to think in the terms of his art. You must also be able to consider materials used and methods followed; you must also have tried to do that sort of thing to know whether it is well done or not.

But, it will be argued, it is impossible to bring all the many and various arts of life into the schools, all the variety of technical exercises. It is not proposed to bring all the arts into the schools, but only those which are most important, those which are principal or typical—gymnastics, music, speech, architecture, sculpture, and painting, which includes drawing. Surely it is not too much to propose that these principal and typical arts shall have a place in our schools and colleges, if our object is to teach people not merely what to do, but how to do it.

You will find certain old fogies who have never done anything, except in the terms and in the forms of language, who will tell you that all thought lies in these terms, that all thought is expressed by talking and writing. They will tell you that the only art which is appropriate to the purposes of school and college work is that of language. If you propose to make music, to paint pictures, or produce statues, you can go to an art school or to a music teacher, but if you want an education keep away from such places. That is what they say. Dear old fogies! they do not know what it is to think in terms of physical effort and movement. They do not know what it is to have strength and agility, the power of it, the joy of it! I wish I had some. They do not know what it is to think in the sounds of music, in the forms of architecture, of sculpture, or painting. They

have no idea of it. They cannot tell you what it is, because it cannot be told. Those things can only be done, and they should be done.

There is a scholarship in gymnastics, in music, in construction, modeling, carving, drawing, and painting—a scholarship those old fogies cannot at all understand or appreciate, for it lies altogether outside of their experience. The history of art. They know something about that, because it lies in the terms of language, but of works



JOSEPH ET LA FEMME DU POTIPHAR—A FRAGMENT  
By Étienne Dinet

of art, except as they exist in the forms of language or literature, of these they know nothing. Dear old fogies! they will pass away with their generation and men with a larger experience, a wider knowledge, a more varied training and ability, will come to take their places; but I have a tender feeling for that old-fashioned, now obsolete, scholarship, so definite within its limits, so finished, so fine.

I cannot let it pass without a word of affection, a word of regret. It will never come back to us. But we shall have something better, and what a difference it will make everywhere when all the principal and typical arts have the place they ought to have in the preparatory schools. You would like to have a school for advanced and professional practice in the arts, but that is impossible under existing con-

ditions. Your pupils come to you with no training, no knowledge of the arts which they propose to follow, no definite conception of what art is. They must be dealt with according to their several measures.

They have no knowledge of its methods, no appreciation of its masterpieces. Instead of leading your pupils into advanced and professional work, you are obliged to teach them the A, B, C's, and they leave you long before they have reached the X, Y, Z's. Out they go into the world, with very imperfect notions of what to do and very little technical knowledge of skill to do anything. You cannot bring them up to advanced or professional work in two or three years. It is impossible. They must begin to

be exercised and trained in the arts when they are yet mere children.

They must begin discriminating, criticising, and judging works of art when they are still young. They must be exercised in every faculty they have. They must acquire rare judgment and power in many directions. The arts first, pure learning and science afterward. Then all together. That is the programme of the new education, which is going to give us the wisdom of life, with the power of art; the education which is going to teach us what to do and also how to



THE NEW MOUNT  
By Ferdinand Pacher  
Courtesy of J. G. Moulton

do it. The boy (or girl), the boy, let us say, who leaves school at the age of fifteen, ought to have had some technical training in all of the principal arts, consequently some technical knowledge and skill to serve him in whatever work he undertakes to do.

Those who can go to college ought to acquire a very considerable training in the principal arts, and knowledge of the best thought that has been put into them. The A. B. degree ought to mean familiarity with the best work of all kinds that has been done; judgment in



THE LOST TRAIL

By Ed. Finelli

Courtesy of J. G. Moulton

regard to it, and considerable technical ability in many directions; and the A. M. degree ought to mean something more than that. You will then have men and women really prepared, properly prepared, for the professional schools.

They will be ready and well prepared for advanced and professional work. As it is the only technical training that a man can get, except in the terms of language, he gets it in schools of special training, like this, and he comes here, as a rule, when it is too late in life for technical training. He might get it, perhaps, if he could spend ten years in the school, but he cannot get it in two or three; but that is all the time he can afford to give to it. He is already getting along in years and must be doing the work he has to do.

We must insist upon technical training as a part of education, not for some of us, but for all of us. We must get that training put into the schools of every grade everywhere. It must become a part of



college and university work. If it takes the place of other things no matter, nothing is of more consequence. Pure learning and the sciences must be brought into connection with technical training in the arts. It is the destiny of pure learning, of science, to serve these arts, contributing motives and purposes, ways and means and methods, and the sooner pure learning and science take their part in the work of life the better. We look to them for both wisdom and power. Work is ennobled by the learning, by the science that is put into it, and science and learning find their highest and finest expression in the work of the world, in the process and in the progress of our civilization, and we see the glory of that civilization in its works of art.

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## PORTRAITURE, OLD AND NEW\*

The remarkable loan exhibition of portraits, recently held in New York, gave an uncommonly good occasion for comparing our modern portraiture with that of the classic periods. Such comparison was the fairer in that the subjects both of the old and the new pictures were usually persons of importance. Our statesmen, generals, captains of industry, authors, ladies of fashion, hung within eyeshot of historic eminences of all degrees, and even of forgotten royalties. The contrast, then, was both social and artistic, but it was hardly in our favor.

From the older canvases breathed dignity and quiet; from those of our time a prevailing unrest, and often the suspicion of vulgarity. It added to this disturbing effect to note the diversity of styles among the moderns. In one portrait character is subordinated to the expression of outdoor daylight; in another it is sacrificed to an insistent linear arabesque; in still a third the mere brush strokes decline to fuse into the likeness of a living creature; while, of course, the smooth, pink, flattering portrait of commerce smirked from every wall.

Even among the good modern portraits the sense of incongruity was extreme; for what middle term may be found for John Alexander, Abbott Thayer, and Sargent? Among the old pictures, on the contrary, there was singular harmony; those bitter foes, David and Delacroix—each represented by a single fine example—did not seem so incompatible as, say, Mr. Frank D. Millet and Mr. J. Alden Weir. Such comparisons and contrasts lead to no other conclusion than that, despite the existence of fine modern portraits, modern portraiture does not exist.

We need not labor the point. One has only to recall the Goupil

\* Examples of old-time portraiture given herewith do not refer specifically to the exhibition named.